

lished in the United States, I was quite pleased to note that Canada is represented by twenty-one authors, as are Australia and New Zealand, and that, moreover, our two official linguistic communities are recognized and each treated to its own bibliographical essay: Wendy Robbins Keitner writes on behalf of anglophone Canada, while Gillian Davies treats francophone Canadian writing. In keeping with the fate of all anthologies, every Canadian user of this one will probably have some idiosyncratic quarrel with the choice of authors and works; for example, my own feeling is that a short poem or two by Marjorie Pickthall, accurately identified in Keitner's article as one of the "most successful women poets" writing between the wars (1098), might have been included. More objectively, however, I think the Canadian choices are defensible, and certainly none of the selections is a "bad" one.

Resisting the chronological ordering, I made Japanese and Chinese authors my major focus, for their work is the most remote from my literary experience. This body of writing, representing two loosely related but distinctly different literary traditions, contains good generic variety and traces diverse female experiences through twenty-four selections by fourteen authors. By reading through all the selections and the relevant regional essays, I think I got enough of a take at least to begin constructing a coherent course unit on writing by women in the Far East. This is not the only—or even the best—way to reorganize the material for classroom presentation, but I think my reading strategy was a good way to test an anthology of world literature. I would recommend this anthology for consideration as the major text in a Women's Studies literature survey, and, more important, as a companion text to anthologies currently used in World Literature courses.

DIANA M. A. REIKE

Dermot McCarthy. *A Poetics of Place: The Poetry of Ralph Gustafson*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1991. pp. 323. \$39.95.

A study of Ralph Gustafson's poetry from *The Golden Chalice* (1935) to *Winter Prophecies* (1987), *A Poetics of Place* is the third book about this contemporary Canadian philosopher-king. My own *Ralph Gustafson* (1979) first mapped the territory by providing a literary biography and locating Gustafson's *oeuvre* in the context of the general evolution of Canadian poetry. Ten years later, McCarthy's *Ralph Gustafson and His Works* updated the survey and directed attention to the expanding body of criticism of Gustafson's writing. This latest study adopts a formalist perspective, aiming to discuss the "poet's craft" and to analyze the poems "as poems." His premise that "to attend Gustafson's craftsmanship . . . is to study the whole man," however, is about as sure as the sound of one hand clapping.

Gustafson's poetics—see *Plummetts and Other Partialities* (1987)—do not mistake poetry for pure music. The recent "New World Northern: Of Poetry and Identity," for instance, clearly states that "[the poem's]

formal structure, controlling rhythm and music, determined by the sensational words it exposes, *endowed by conceptual communication, signifies*" (231-32; emphasis added). Frequently citing American critic Charles Altieri as well as Gustafson, McCarthy indeed comments not only on style, but also on "sensibility," and even on theme, despite his harsh words for Northrop Frye, Margaret Atwood, and thematic critics generally.

The book rehearses Gustafson's three main phases: from youthful attraction to "the poetry of 'vision' and the desire for transcendence"; through experimentation with irony, counterpoint, and a new emphasis on immanence—in response to the war and to the example of Auden, Spender, and, later, Dylan Thomas; to the "concentric stance" of *Rocky Mountain Poems* (1960) and later collections.

The first section contains no new revelations; McCarthy justifiably dismisses *The Golden Chalice* as "a mawkish heap of convention, romantic cliché, and dated posturing" (14), the only poems worth remembering being a handful of nature lyrics. It is Gustafson's enduring "regard for nature and landscape" which prevents him from becoming a "full-fledged Modernist" in the 1930s and 1940s, McCarthy posits. The pivotal "Mythos" is given an interesting reading as a poem about perception, its juxtaposition of Icarus (transcendence) and Theseus (immanence) showing "two opposed stances or attitudes toward the world" (51). McCarthy highlights tensions which once earned Gustafson the epithet "a married Hopkins."

In his 1947 essay "Among the Millet," Gustafson used the word "concentric" to describe the Romantic poet Archibald Lampman's technique: "Lampman came directly into passionate contact with nature, made concentric the observed and the observer" (70). Having presented thesis (Romanticism) and antithesis (Modernism), McCarthy depicts Gustafson's third phase (Postmodernism) as synthesis, typified by just such a "concentric stance." Of course, there is considerable debate as to whether Modernism and Postmodernism represent continuity or discontinuity, and, without coming down on one side or the other, McCarthy argues persuasively that Gustafson evolves from one mode to the other "without any violent rejection." While Gustafson may not mock the canonical literary forms of "official culture" as do some Postmodernists, his sense of our being "doomed . . . amid magnificence" predisposes him towards the Postmodern view of the world as "mysterious, dangerous, uncanny, and beyond the traditional strategies of logocentric discourse" (90), claims McCarthy, citing William Spanos's study *Repetitions*.

This analysis captures the sense of the unutterableness of the Rockies's magnificence—one of the main subjects of *Rocky Mountain Poems*. However, it fits less well the later poems of place set in the hamlet of North Hatley in Quebec's Eastern Townships, where Gustafson has lived most of his life, and where his "essentially Romantic sensibility"—a McCarthy refrain—issues in poems which present the poet and his beloved wife as exquisitely in tune with the land. Revealingly, Gustafson

defines the poem in "New World Northern" as "articulate love." McCarthy does note the "recurring imagery of domestic order amid the northern landscape which runs throughout the later North Hatley poems," but he fails to show how this is "concentric" with the Post-modernist sense of the dangerous, uncanny, and unnamable. Given McCarthy's orientation and his title, *A Poetics of Place*, this is a serious problem.

A central forty-page segment of the book concerns *Rocky Mountain Poems*, which is presented as an important turning point in the development, not just of Gustafson's, but of Canada's, poetry. McCarthy gives an impoverished reading by stressing semiotics to the virtual exclusion of semantics. On the plus side, however, the reading is enlivened by inclusion of references to manuscript drafts; a small, but illuminating, extract from Betty Gustafson's diary; and poems by Stevens, Pound, and Williams as possible intertexts for the resonant nature-cum-art poem "At Moraine Lake."

Throughout his study, McCarthy's arbitrary yet absolute assignation of emotive effects to sounds and his forcing of rhyme and assonance create difficulties. For example, referring to "Prologue to Summer," he comments: "The modulation of vowels in 'fieldmouse' echoes the sound pattern of 'gangrened stump'" (35). Really? Again, take the following lines:

Male-naked the air. Compel!  
Urgent the deed, urgent  
And muscular the dream  
Invaginate!

McCarthy straightfacedly glosses these sexually charged lines by noting that a "spondee-anapest-iamb" is followed by a "trochee-iamb-trochee." Come again? "The trochee-iamb-trochee of 'urgent the deed, urgent,' with the repetition of 'urgent' urging us to the muscular dream, is itself a muscular movement of the reader to the climactic 'Invaginate!'" (36). Clinical, yes; insightful, no.

It would not come as a surprise that McCarthy's "reader" is always referred to as "he"; that we hear repeatedly about "mankind," "man," and "modern man"; and that poetry which is "muscular," displays "aggressive wit" and "independence," and keeps its "tension . . . masterfully controlled" is automatically preferred to that which is "effeminate" or "anorexic." Sexist bias such as this has no place in literary criticism in the 1990s; it reflects badly on both McCarthy and the editors at McGill-Queen's.

Gustafson's philosophical poem "The Disquisition" concludes that "No poetry's in the head; / As none is written until read" (82). The knower is intimately connected with the known; readers create meanings. To insist that they be "concentric," however—whether in poetry or in the discourse of criticism—may lead to egoism, solipsism, silence, and exclusion. Two hands playing together, like two eyes seeing, like a wife and a husband in a happy marriage—such intercourse would seem

to be necessary to create the harmony and balance that Gustafson's later poems desire. "The Disquisition" is not his last word. Love is.

WENDY ROBBINS

Sandra Lee Bartky. *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York and London: Routledge, 1990. pp. 141. \$37.50; \$12.95 pb.

*Femininity and Domination* is an instance of philosophy at its best: a collection of essays filled with cogent arguments in support of critical insights, which clarify and enrich our understanding (in this case, of the nature of women's oppression), and which point to related avenues of critical exploration that the reader is sparked to pursue. The seven essays in this collection were written over a period of fifteen years. As such, they reflect, not only the author's progression of thought concerning the nature of women's oppression, but also the more general transformations within feminist theory.

The primary focus of Bartky's collection is upon the dynamic relations which hold between social structures oppressive to women and female subjectivity. In particular, Bartky's hybrid Marxist-Socialist-Radical-Foucauldian feminist analysis of the ways in which the values and norms of an oppressive society become internalized by oppressed subjects—written/inscribed upon our bodies/minds—reveals how the locus of power is displaced from the state to the subject (both as a class of subjects and as individual subjects), rendering it difficult to discern who has power over whom. Bartky reveals how oppressed subjects become complicit in our own oppression, how we as "individuals" (seemingly) "choose" to keep ourselves "in line" by abiding and striving to attain/live by the very conception of our "Selves" as inferior. Traditional liberal accounts (as well as feminist appropriations of such accounts) of the nature of "The Individual" and "his" relation to (that is, independence from) "The State" are called into question at a fundamental level.

Nowhere is this calling into question more apparent than in the three articles which constitute the "core" of Bartky's book: "On Psychological Oppression"; "Narcissism, Femininity, and Alienation"; and "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Power." Taken together, these three articles reveal what Bartky takes to be the *systemic* political nature, source, process, and effect of "psychic alienation" (30). Bartky describes alienation as involving a fragmentation as well as a "prohibition." Within North American liberal individualism, the ideal of a whole, integrated, rational, autonomous, free chooser is held out for all individuals to aspire to and to be measured against. At the same time, North American society systematically creates within oppressed individuals a fragmentation of consciousness which (together with more formal social barriers) prohibits the oppressed from attaining such an ideal. Fragmentation of consciousness involves "internaliz-